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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/771,131	01/26/2001	Satoshi Mizutani	2309/01213	6716

7590 08/14/2002

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EXAMINER

CHEVALIER, ALICIA ANN

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1772

DATE MAILED: 08/14/2002

6

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.	09/771,131		Applicant(s)
Examiner	MIZUTANI ET AL.		Art Unit 1772

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the corresponding address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 May 2002.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 8 and 9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 3

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election of Group I, claims 1-7 in Paper No. 5 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description: 10 and 11. A proposed drawing correction, corrected drawings, or amendment to the specification to add the reference sign(s) in the description, are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The phrases “falling between” and “falls between” in claims 2, 4 and 5 are unclear which renders the claims vague and indefinite. It is unclear from the claim language if the end points of the ranges recited in the claims are included or excluded.

Claim 3 is unclear in scope which renders it vague and indefinite. It is unclear from the claim language is the two types of particulate materials are two different materials and two different sizes or just two different sizes.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article 21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

6. Claims 1, 6, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lasko et al. (6,277,104 B1).

Lasko discloses a body facing liquid permeable cover sheet comprising a porous substrate (micropores) with a plurality of liquid permeable pores (perforations), a plurality of liquid impermeable barrier structures (protrusions), and sintered particles (col. 13, lines 24-57, figure 9). The cover sheet may be made of any of several thermoplastic polymer materials (col. 6, lines

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58-60) which are air permeable but liquid impermeable (col. 13, lines 28-29). The sheet is further embossed for a three dimensional configuration (col. 8, lines 35-63).

7. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Clark et al. (5,853,846).

Clark discloses a conformable magnetic articles comprising polymeric binder layer with antiskid and reflective particles adhered the surface (col. 6, lines 6-29). The polymeric binder layer is further imparted with protuberances (col. 7, lines 28-47 and figure 5). The articles may also be with a multitude of perforations that could allow flow of the traffic bearing structure through the strip (col. 11, lines 43-54 and col. 16, lines 50-59).

8. Claims 1, 2, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ryan et al. (5,019,062).

Ryan discloses a liquid permeable topsheet comprising a polymeric lamina with perforations, particulate material, and protrusions on the surface (figure 5). The particulate material has an average particle size of 2 to 4 microns (col. 3, lines 48-50). The protrusions have a height of 0.5 mm (col. 5, lines 44-47).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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10. Claims 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lasko et al. (6,277,104 B1).

Lasko discloses all the limitation of the instant invention except the particle size, amount of particulate material, and the height of the protrusions. The exact size of the particles, amount of particulate material and the height of the protrusions is deemed to be a cause effective variable with regard to the wicking capability of the top sheet. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have determined the optimum value of a cause effective variable such as particle size, amount of particulate, and protrusion height through routine experimentation in the absence of a showing of criticality in the claimed combined thickness. *In re Boesch*, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980), *In re Woodruff*, 16 USPQ2d 1934, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990). One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to optimize these values to improve rate of liquid transmission through the sheet.

11. Claims 2-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark et al. (5,853,846).

Clark discloses all the limitation of the instant invention except the particle size, amount of particulate material, and the height of the protrusions. The exact size of the particles, amount of particulate material and the height of the protrusions is deemed to be a cause effective variable with regard to the antiskid properties. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have determined the optimum value of a cause effective variable such as particle size, amount of particulate, and protrusion height through routine experimentation in the absence of a showing of criticality in the claimed combined thickness. *In re Boesch*, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA

1980), *In re Woodruff*, 16 USPQ2d 1934, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990). One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to optimize these values make the article more skid resistant.

The method of forming the product is not germane to the issue of patentability of the product itself. Further, when the prior art discloses a product which reasonably appears to be either identical with or only slightly different than a product claim in a product-by-process claim, the burden is on the Applicant to present evidence from which the Examiner could reasonably conclude that the claimed product differs in kind from those of the prior art. *In re Brown*, 459 F.2d 531, 173 USPQ 685 (CCPA 1972); *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974). This burden is NOT discharged solely because the product was derived from a process not known to the prior art. *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974).

Furthermore, the determination of patentability for a product-by-process claim is based on the product itself and not on the method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process. *In re Thorpe*, 227 USPQ 946, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) and MPEP §2113. In this case, the limitation wherein the protrusions are formed by mechanically stretching the sheet is a method of production and therefore does not determine the patentability of the product itself.

12. Claims 4 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan et al. (5,019,062).

Ryan discloses all the limitation of the instant invention except the amount of particulate material. The exact size amount of particulate material is deemed to be a cause effective variable with regard to the wicking capability of the top sheet. It would have been obvious to one having

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ordinary skill in the art to have determined the optimum value of a cause effective variable such as the amount of particulate through routine experimentation in the absence of a showing of criticality in the claimed combined thickness. *In re Boesch*, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980), *In re Woodruff*, 16 USPQ2d 1934, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990). One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to optimize these values to improve rate of liquid transmission through the sheet.

The method of forming the product is not germane to the issue of patentability of the product itself. Further, when the prior art discloses a product which reasonably appears to be either identical with or only slightly different than a product claim in a product-by-process claim, the burden is on the Applicant to present evidence from which the Examiner could reasonably conclude that the claimed product differs in kind from those of the prior art. *In re Brown*, 459 F.2d 531, 173 USPQ 685 (CCPA 1972); *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974). This burden is NOT discharged solely because the product was derived from a process not known to the prior art. *In re Fessman*, 489 F.2d 742, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974).

Furthermore, the determination of patentability for a product-by-process claim is based on the product itself and not on the method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process. *In re Thorpe*, 227 USPQ 946, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) and MPEP §2113. In this case, the limitation wherein the protrusions are formed by mechanically stretching the sheet is a method of production and therefore does not determine the patentability of the product itself.

Conclusion

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alicia Chevalier whose telephone number is (703) 305-1139.

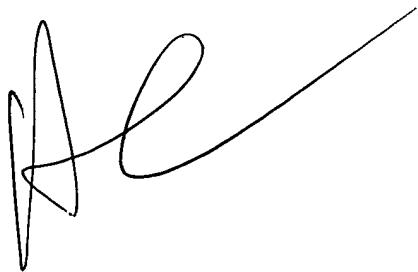
The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays

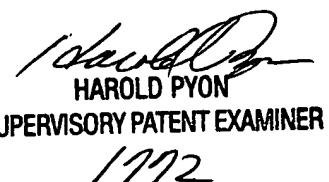
If attempts to reach the Examiner are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached by dialing (703) 308-4251. The fax phone number for the organization official non-final papers is (703) 872-9310. The fax number for after final papers is (703) 872-9311.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose phone number is (703) 308-0661.

ac

8/8/02




HAROLD PYON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
1772

8/9/02